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**Federal Aviation
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InFO

Information for Operators

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http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Ceiling sometimes required for dispatch or flight release under 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121, § 121.613

Purpose: To explain when ceiling must be considered in accordance with § 121.613.

Background: The FAA has been questioned about the significance of ceiling forecasts and reports in flight planning, dispatch and flight release. Under Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) visibility is generally the controlling minimum for approach and landing – without regard to ceiling. However, § 121.613 requires that aircraft dispatchers and those people authorized to release flights in supplemental operations consider ceiling at the destination airport in certain situations.

Discussion: Section 121.613 requires “...that the weather conditions will be at or above the authorized minimums at the estimated time of arrival at the airport or airports to which dispatched or released.” However, the term “authorized minimums” is not defined in 14 CFR 1.1. Authorized minimums are identified in various places including minimum vectoring altitude charts (call the appropriate ARTCC center watch supervisor), FAA regulations, operations specifications (OpSpecs), and instrument approach charts. Therefore authorized minimums may not be uniformly understood, particularly those minimums in which a ceiling is specified.

Situations in which ceiling requirements apply include the following:

- When the destination airport has **no instrument approach** available, forecast ceiling must be at minimum vectoring altitude (MVA) or 1000 feet AGL (with 3 miles visibility), whichever is higher;
- When a **circle-to-land** must be conducted at the destination airport, forecast ceiling must be at charted circling minimums or at 1000 feet AGL ceiling (with 3 miles visibility), whichever is higher, as specified in the operator’s OpSpecs; and or
- When the instrument approach chart for the destination **airport specifies a controlling ceiling** value, ceiling must be forecast at or above the pertinent ceiling.

Recommended Action: Managers, trainers, aircraft dispatchers and people authorized to release flights in part 121 operations should collaborate to ensure that the significance of ceiling is uniformly understood and taken into account during the dispatch/flight release planning processes. The content of this InFO should be explicitly reflected in the training of aircraft dispatchers and those people authorized to release flights.

Contact: For questions or more information regarding the content of this InFO, contact Dennis Mills, dennis.mills@faa.gov, (202)-493-4901.

Approved by: AFS-200